



News Release

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Whooping cough epidemic leads more adults to get vaccinated *Epidemic surpasses 2,000 reported cases in Washington halfway through 2012*

OLYMPIA — The ongoing whooping cough epidemic in Washington is driving higher demand for vaccine among adults as people protect themselves and their families from pertussis. More adults are getting vaccinated – showing that they’re getting the word that prevention measures like vaccination and staying home when you’re sick help protect those most at-risk.

“Adults in Washington are doing their part by getting the whooping cough booster, called Tdap,” says Secretary of Health, Mary Selecky. “The increase in adult vaccination is vital to protecting babies who are the most vulnerable because they’re too young to be fully vaccinated. Thank you to everyone who’s gotten vaccinated, and I want others to follow their example.”

Between March 25 and May 26, 2012, our state immunization registry recorded 82,453 doses of Tdap for adults age 19 and older. That’s well more than double the 34,171 doses recorded in the same time period last year, showing the growing demand for Tdap in the face of the epidemic.

Data from health plans also show an increase. [Group Health](#) gave almost 60 percent more Tdap to adults in April of this year compared to April 2011. [Premera Blue Cross](#) is seeing a similar trend, with the number of Tdap vaccinations in April 2012 up by more than 70 percent for its members compared to an average month. These increases are good news, especially with yearly 2012 total reported pertussis cases now at 2,092 — the highest since the 1940s.

“We’re asking everyone to double-check with their health care provider to make sure they’re up-to-date on vaccinations,” said Secretary Selecky. “Our reported case count has climbed above 2,000 already with half of the year to go. It’s vital that teens and adults get the Tdap booster.”

The Department of Health bought more than 27,000 doses of Tdap vaccine for uninsured and underinsured adults to remove a cost barrier. Making these extra doses easily available means

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more people can get vaccinated. Getting vaccinated protects the person getting the shot and helps protect people at highest risk for complications, like babies and pregnant women.

The Tdap vaccine is for people 11 and older and can be found by contacting your health care provider, [local health agency](#), or pharmacy. Only one shot is needed. Younger children need five doses of DTaP by the time they're seven for best protection. It takes about two weeks from the time of vaccination to be protected.

For more information about the epidemic, visit the Department of Health [whooping cough epidemic website](#). The [Department of Health website](#) (doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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